



The New You

Part One – Colossians 3:1-11



New Way of Thinking

- ❑ Read Colossians 3:1-4. Since the believer has a new position in Christ, he/she is supposed to have new attitudes and actions.
 1. According to verses 1-4, what is the believer's position? What is true of the believer in the past, present, and future?¹

- ❑ Considering these facts, Paul says to believers, "Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things". (3:1-2)
 2. What do you think it means to "set our hearts on things above" and "set our minds on things above"?² What is the difference between "things above" and "earthly things"?³

 3. How can we set our hearts and minds on things above? What must we do?⁴



Putting Off the Old

- ❑ Since the believer has a new position in Christ, he/she needs to "put off" old, bad attitudes and actions, and "put on" new, good attitudes and actions. Read Colossians 3:5-11.
 4. Believers are to "put to death" whatever belongs to their earthly nature. As examples, what must believers "put to death" according to verse 5?⁵

- ❑ Paul says "greed" (or "covetousness") is "idolatry". This attitude is idolatry because it puts some object or desire in the place that God should occupy in peoples' hearts. This attitude values "earthly things" more than "things above".

¹ The believer has been united with Christ. Thus the believer "died" with Christ (3:3a) and was "raised with Christ" to a new life (3:1a; 2:12-13; cp. Romans 6:3-5). This new life is the resurrection life of Christ (3:4a). As Paul says in another letter, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20a). Paul also says, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). At present, the believer's life is "hidden with Christ" (3:3b). It is safe and secure in him. In the future, the believer will "appear with [Christ] in glory" (3:4). When Christ returns, the believer's salvation and transformation will be complete (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:20-21).

² "set your hearts" (*zēteite*, literally "seek"); "set your minds" (*phroneite*) – involving both the intellect and will.

³ "the things above" (*ta anō*) – the things of God in the new order, characterized by righteousness, eternal life, and harmony with God; "earthly things" – the things of the old order, characterized by sin, death, and self-centeredness. Our thinking and acting should be oriented to heavenly values rather than worldly values.

⁴ We must seek to know God through His Word, prayer, fellowship and service. We should apply Romans 12:1-2.

⁵ "sexual immorality" (*porneia*) – a general term for sexual misbehavior; "impurity" (*akatharsia*) – a general term for moral evil; "lust" (*pathos*) – [shameful] passion; "evil desires" (*epithymian kakēn*) – desires opposed to God; "greed" (*pleonexia*) – an inappropriate desire for more, also translated "covetousness" (ESV).

5. What reasons does Paul give for “putting to death” whatever belongs to the earthly nature? (3:6-7)⁶

- ❑ Paul contrasts the believer’s old life with the new life (3:7). He says, “you have taken off your old self...and have put on the new self” (3:9-10).⁷ This is the language of changing clothes. As a person takes off old, dirty clothes, and puts on new, clean clothes, the believer is to put off the attitudes and actions of the old self, and put on the proper attitudes and actions of the new self.⁸

6. What additional attitudes and actions must believers get rid of, according to verses 8-9?⁹



- ❑ While the believer has a new position in Christ, he/she is not completely new. The new self is “being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (3:10, *emphasis mine*). Renewal is a process. Believers continue to grow in their knowledge of God, and they continue to grow in their likeness to Christ, who is “the image of the invisible God” (1:15).¹⁰
- ❑ The “new self” is part of a new humanity. Read Colossians 3:11.¹¹ There are many distinctions among human beings, including ethnicity, nationality, cultural differences, educational level, social class, etc. When people become Christians, these distinctions do not suddenly disappear, but they should no longer divide people who are truly united in Christ.

Putting On the New

- ❑ After telling believers what to “put off” (3:5-11), Paul tells them what to “put on” (3:12-17). “Putting on” is the subject of “The New You, Part Two” (Lesson 8).

Reflection/Application

- Do you desire a new life? Newness of life is found in Christ. Do you need to receive him?
- If you are a true believer, you have already died with Christ, and been raised with Christ. You have a new life! Is your heart and mind set on things above, or earthly things? What attitudes and actions of the old self are still present in your life? Identify particular attitudes and actions that you need to “put off. Ask God to help you to get rid of them, and do it by God’s grace.

⁶ First of all, Paul says, “because the wrath of God is coming” (3:6). This refers to God’s judgment. Sin is offensive to the holiness and righteousness of God, and must be judged. While believers receive forgiveness of their sins, that does not mean sin is acceptable. As Paul says elsewhere, “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Romans 6:1-2). Secondly, Paul says, “these [sinful] ways [characterize] the life you once lived” (3:7) – your old life, not your new life in Christ.

⁷ When a person is united with Christ through faith, he/she has a new identity. “The old self” (*ton palaion anthrōpon*) is the believer’s old identity – the fallen “in-Adam self”, outside Christ, under the dominion of sin (i.e., the rule or controlling power of sin). “The new self” (*ton neon [anthrōpon]*) is the believer’s new identity – the redeemed “in-Christ self”, set free from the dominion of sin (*Romans 6:2-10*).

⁸ The change in identity happens once, but we must continue to “put off” the characteristics of the old self.

⁹ “anger” (*orgē*) and “rage” (*thymos*) – have overlapping meanings: “malice” (*kakia*) – an attitude that wishes, or does, harm to another; “slander” (*blasphēmia*) – abusive speech that harms another person’s reputation (lies or gossip); “filthy language” (*aischrologia* – literally, shameful words) – abusive or obscene speech; and “lying to one another”.

¹⁰ To be conformed to the image of Christ is the believer’s destiny (*Romans 8:29*), but this will not be completed until Christ’s return (1 John 3:2). At that time, the “image of God” in man will be completely restored in believers’ lives.

¹¹ “barbarian” – a non-Greek who did not speak that language. “Scythian” – lowest kind of barbarian, probably a slave; a term applied to tribes around the Black Sea from which a despised slave class was drawn. Also see Galatians 3:27-28.